

SONGS



OF THE
COUNTRY

TELLERMAN



Bequest of
Rev. H. C. Scadding, D.D.
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SONGS OF THE COUNTRY.



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SONGS OF THE COUNTRY.



BY
STAUNTON BRODIE.

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SONGS OF THE COUNTRY.

THE MARTINS OF PEVENSEY.



NE drowsy day in the
Autumn,
Through shadow and
pleasant heat,
I came with a quiet foot-
step
Into Pevensey Street ;
Over me clouds were
flying,
The breeze was gently
sighing,
The winding stream re-
plying

A melody low and sweet.

Purely the song of nature
Fell on my eager ear,
The happy hum of the noonday
Flowing the heart to cheer :

Striking a chord of pleasure
In Life's too mournful measure,
Giving me thoughts to treasure,
And brighten the fading year.

So musing—while the amber leaf
Came fluttering on my view—
Suddenly over the narrow street
A host of martins flew :
Their restless music swelling,
As if each throat were telling
Of a peaceful sunny dwelling
Across the ocean blue.

Over the red roofs swiftly
They swept in fitful flight,
Soaring, eddying, diving,
Glossy, with gleams of white ;
One to another calling
Depart—the leaf is falling,
Harsh winds will soon be brawling,
The days bring no delight.

Some sped afar to visit
The scenes that had charmed them most,
And store a bright remembrance
Of castle, and hill, and coast :

Where Pemsey river flowing
Through meads in sunlight glowing,
Was slowly seaward going
By many a tideworn post.

I thought—to the lands of the south
Soon you will hasten away,
Exchanging for olive and palm
Our season of solemn decay ;
Pale Autumn sadly waning,
Cold Winter darkly reigning,
Robin alone remaining
To cheer us with his lay.

But when sweet May is bright with buds,
And last year's leaves are shed,
Low you will fly about our shores
And circle overhead ;
In troubles o'er me stealing
A power to me revealing
Great Nature's tender feeling
Shall teach me not to dread.

CONSOLATION.



MANY days a darkling
storm

Red with lightning's
fearful flame

Beat upon my wasted
form ;

But a golden evening
came

Shedding sunshine on
my way,

Till aside my cares I
cast ;

For, as ever, so to-day,
Truth illumed the cheerless past.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE.



A SOFT light glimmers in the
eastern sky,
The starry night gives
place to red-eyed morn,
Bright dewdrops sparkle
on the purple thorn,
The leaves fall off and die.

Hastening to his toil, the
labourer greets
The pleasant lustre of the
dawning day ;
The rising sun shoots forth
a pallid ray

To light the silent streets.

Now busy housewives tend their cheerful fires,
And curling down the land the thin blue smoke
Commingles with the mist that wreathes the oak,
And peacefully expires.

Now ends the wood, and where the pale meads spread,
The grey elms tower on the expanding scene,
With a sweet tune the rannel flows between
Over its pebbly bed.

I trace the stream where oft in wild alarm
The pheasant seeks the brake with startled whirr ;
The glossy blackbird carols in the fir
Down by the gabled farm.

Amidst the gorse a lonely daisy grows,
A frail survivor of the teeming leas :
The sheep-bell's tinkling music on the breeze
Melodiously flows.

The dark green ivy-leaf with yellow vein
Profuse, with shining holly interweaves ;
The haws burn in the hedge, the maple leaves
Are scattered in the lane.

So in my life the seasons pass away
Yet leave a tale to which my heart uplifts,
Though truth be fallow like the leaf that drifts
Down one sweet Autumn day.

THE PORTALS OF THE UNKNOWN.



BENEATH an arching
dome of opal hue .
I stood alone, and
mused in calm
repose ;
On either side a jasper
pillar rose,
And round my feet
long grass luxuriant
grew,
How long a time
untrod I scarcely
knew.

Through a mysterious mist there came the flow
Of mingled sounds, that told a tale intense
Of a mad quest for lost experience ;
And then I found my road in sudden snow,
Under the wintry starlight's solemn glow.

Next in a meadow was my lonely way :
Time held my thoughts in a tumultuous spell ;
I bade to happiness a long farewell ;
The hidden paths of care before me lay
Deep in the shadows of a distant day.



THE SEAGULL.



W

ITH bitter wail
The icy gale
Rules the sere land
and ocean lone ;
The bare tree quivers,
The pale sward
shivers,
The crest of the wave
is the seagull's
throne.

Afar he soars
While the tempest roars,
And the great waves meet where the tide ebbs out ;
He dives and dips
• And his broad wing drips
With the spray of the sea as he darts about.

With mournful cry
He sails the sky,
Then downward sweeps on glistening wing ;
Or hangs a space
With trembling grace
In the arching breaker—a true storm-king.

He is borne along
In the endless throng
Of the tawny seas that shoreward leap :
And with constant throat
He blends his note
With the grand old song of the troubled deep.

He knows no fears
But proudly steers
Into the rain-squall's misty veil :
Where the mad surf breaks
In foaming flakes,
And the path of the angry wind is pale.

My thought is away
With the seagull gray,
Where the tangled driftweed bounds his flight ;
How true we seem
In the wintry gleam
Under the lustrous eye of night !

Ah ! lonely bird !
My heart is stirred,
I too with desolation strive ;
But dauntless truth
With wrack and ruth
Shall wrestle—conquer—and survive.



A WINTER EVEN-SONG.



REY Winter— Nature's
night — with slow
advance
Enwraps the pallid
earth in sombre
shade ;
All the bright life of
hill, and moor, and
glade
Lies in a tranquil trance.

See in the season's store man's labour blest ;
The village rickyards teem with yellow corn,
And sounds of winnowing at early morn
His honest toil attest.

Not now afar a busy life he leads ;
His crisp tread echoes on the ice-bound ways
About his home ; the thrift of longer days
Suffices for his needs.

The care of flocks is his, or in the gleam
Of rare sunlight the plough his time employs,
And well he likes to set his sturdy boys
 To exercise his team.

But the bleak weather is a foe to work ;
A hazy veil enfolds the distant hills,
The air is keen, and melancholy chills
 In gusty corners lurk.

Few are the glimpses of the changing moon,
Lost in sad clouds the sun may rise and wane,
The mournful storm that heralds Winter's reign
 Darkens the cheerless noon.

The snowflakes fly before the icy blast
That bows the trembling larches in the dale ;
The chimneys are as caverns to the gale
 That sweeps in thunder past.

Pale frost succeeds the storm, and silent dew
Falls on the land, until at morning time
The sycamore with buds of crystal rime
 Seems blossoming anew.

The wistful cattle gathered by the pond
In mute amazement scan its frozen face ;
Across it slender shadows one may trace
 Cast by the firs beyond.

The brown woods in a waste of shining snow
Glow with red leaves that burn like dying fires ;
The warbling beck, alone of Nature's quires,
Flows through the glen below.

Cropping the scanty grass the moor-sheep stray
Amongst the fiery ferns and purple ling ;
A joyous melody the trickling spring
Gives to the pensive day.

Comfort within the leaping fire affords,
And in its ruddy light remembrance dreams :
Or music sooths, as, when the ancient themes
Have wakened kindred chords,

Slowly afflicting thought away will glide,
Sweet memories disclosing more and more—
As silver pools lie cool along the shore
Left by the ebbing tide.

Christmas with light and song has come and gone,
And the full year like one brief beat of time
Is counted with the past : the Church bells chime
Till old and new are one.

THE LAND OF IMAGINATION.



THE scene is old, the
thought is free ;
I labour at the life to
be—
Time will not now
recall for me
 The story of a
 day ;
The brook flows down-
ward to the sea
 Yet I am far away.

Gone is the past—yet lives anew
In retrospect, as real, as true,
As all a mirror holds in view,
 We turn as from a glass—
There was the happiness we knew,
 And then it came to pass.

My toil against the stream begun,
Whilst I no honest labour shun,
I claim the surface and the sun,
 And love the ripples flow ;
False tales like under-currents run,
 I care not where they go.

Oh, well for child and maiden fair
To call their own the boundless air,
Nor deem that ill is lurking there
 Love from their hearts to steal ,
To think for grief with tender care
 As for the common weal.

For now is manhood's sternest reign,
Onward the journey, oft in pain,
O'er rocky steep and arid plain
 Till evening shadows fall ;
While busy Rumour makes it gain
 Our follies to recall.

Alternate rise our hopes and fears
Through Poverty's afflicting years,
A skill that fails, a heart that sears,
 Pursue their toilsome road ;
A world that neither sees nor hears
 Makes heavier the load.

The home—the street—become a stage
Where human storms about me rage,
And strange demands my thoughts engage
 Till I can give no more ;
Then fortune turns a pleasant page
 And yields her welcome store :

For in our lives each great event,
The prize of moments wisely spent,
Stands like a fair-built monument
 To greet the kindly eye ;
And I would bend a gaze intent
 On such when I pass by.

In imaged visions rise sublime
The battlements of tested Time ;
Beyond the scoff of rogue or mime
 Truth's banner crowns the height ;
Within is laughter's happy chime,
 And friendship's dear delight.

Aught that in Nature may attract,
And every graceful human act
Live through the infancy of fact
 For the great sorrow's sake,—
To sleep, by ills no longer wracked,
 Calm as a limpid lake.

Far in the dim retreats of care
Each may another's troubles share,
Solace for me has been to spare
 When most my woes were keen ;
When looks were cold, the board was bare,
 And madness ruled between.

Here is our haven—here at last ;
What though we steered through perils vast
That dusty mirage of the past
 Shall cheat our sense no more ;
Only the sky is overcast,
 The waves beat on the shore.

Seek not the future's nursling dower,
Nor crave the past's enchanted bower—
For solemn is the twilight hour
 Where fast its record fades—
Its light declines on leaf and flower,
 A scythe sweeps through its glades.

Knowledge—the pleasure of our kind—
Is all to give and free to find,
The light whose rays inform the mind
 Shall guide the valiant will,
Till the false nature sinks behind
 And truth is feeling still.

THE ANGEL OF TIME.



HERE is a little traveller,
An angel bright is he,
And round a glorious
earth he speeds,
And scatters everywhere
the seeds
Of freedom for the free.

And oftentimes the eye
Will light as he goes by,
And gaze, and wonder
why.

Sweet pleasure to the heart
How sweetly it can feel
When he has done his part,
For he is very real,
Yet himself may not reveal.

Oh ! what lightsome love is his !
'Tis the treasure of a glance,
And the bliss of reverie,
It lives in childish glee,
And the graces of the dance —
What lightsome love it is !

He fans a fancy's flame
And gently goes his way,
Every true and steadfast aim
He aids from day to day ;
His path is all delight,
And such fondness in his flight —
Oh ! such fondness in his flight.

He scatters plenty wide,
His gifts are all unbought,
To minds sore tried a friendly guide,
Time's angel, faithful Thought.



FIRE-SIDE REFLECTIONS.



L

LOVED light ! the house-
hold gloaming marks
The hour when day is
done,
I muse—my fancies fade
like sparks
That vanish one by one.

Each with a greater
brilliance burns
An instant ere it dies ;
So the aspiring mind
discerns

In every thought a prize.

One lingers long, some period bright
That we remember best ;
Some early unalloyed delight
More cherished than the rest.

The buoyant love of childhood's days
When life no sadness knew,
Or trustful friendship's fervid rays
That youth's bright pathway strew.

Perchance a vision of renown,
Or dazzling dream of fame,
Ere fancy's fire has dwindled down
And left—an empty name.

The summer clouds are red and gold
That deck the sunset sky,
But while their beauty we behold
In night's dark world they die.

Ah, so the day-dreams of our toil
Appear of roseate hue,
But in neglect's cold shades they spoil
And vanish from the view.

How endless are the busy schemes,
The ways that seem so plain ;
We know them now for mystic dreams,
Chimeras of the brain.

The healing powers of time have cooled
Those fevers of our youth,
And man alternately is ruled
By happiness or ruth.

Our thoughts on changes that occur
Are calmly now bestowed,
As when a weary traveller
Looks back upon his road.

Once freed from speculation's maze
There comes that brighter day
When from a welcome height we gaze
Upon the toilsome way.

He who the pathways of the past
With pure delight can scan,
Is, wheresoe'er his lot be cast,
A truly happy man.



THE WORLD OF MEMORY.



THAT happy hour
That brings an old world
back to me !
Glimpses of gentleness
That soothed a child's
distress,
Of boyish freedom on
the heaving sea,
A happy pleasing hour—
My heart is tender as
can be.

The years roll by !
A gloomy contrast comes ;
In the grim land of genie and of gnomes
My faint self I descry,
And to a strange decree
I am bound as by a spell—
Alone, and yet not free,
A mourner waiting for a tolling bell,
As though all life were one funereal knell.

Then in my home, even there the glamour falls ;
 By the red fire contemplative
 I bid my reason live,
Fair action to fair discipline it calls ;
I find a gladdening power within me grow
To keep my thought from outward show--
Yet will it falter, till I scarce can say
Time as a truthful tale has borne away
The earnest labour of my every day.

Next by the water in the rustling wood ;
“ Oh, can there not remain one pleasant mood ?
Kind Memory fly to me on wings of love ! ”
 But silence reigns,
 And for my pains
Only the grey cloud sails slowly on above.

 Amidst a hurrying host,
And the deep din of passing merchandise,
Most flies reflection when I need it most—
 There, like a blind man led,
 I move disquieted,
And fatherless my gloomy thoughts arise.

The years roll by—I wake as from a trance
 With a glad longing to advance ;
 No more, in vain regret,
To bear the burden of an alien debt ;
Now cherished hope is mine, oh thankful thought,
 And freedom dearly bought ;

Gone is the pain,
My senses charm again !
In line and wrinkle all the record lies ;
Truth in the great present goes without disguise
And all its treasured happiness I know,
Sweet Memory ! it was whispered long ago.



LOVE'S LADDER.



UR willing childhood,
toiling youth,
Decried, all purpose-
less appear ;—
An enemy contests the
truth,
And judges that he
will not hear.

Beyond the earth in
skies serene
There is a land of
wise intent,

Where oft disclosed a sunny scene
Invites us to a brave ascent.

Resigned, we thread the awful maze,
And yield to evil's fearful wrack ;
We plant our steps with upward gaze
Without a thought of turning back.

The spirit to its dangerous post
With truth's determination clings,
And braves against a furious host
The burning darts that falsehood flings.

Fear not to face it one by one,
The faithful soul in love begins,
And when the solemn strife is done
Again a happier freedom wins.

Away the darkling shadows steal,
In light a trodden path appears ;
And pleasant memories reveal
The treasures of our vanished years.

A love for every good design,
And faith to bear a friendly part,
At no ill-fortune to repine—
The steps by which we reach the heart.

And they are strong with ample space,
Nor frowns the height with dangers rife ;
And each when he has found his place
Goes up the ladder into life.

A SONG FOR A SICK BED.



CARRY the sunlight in
with thee
That plays on the ver-
dant sward,
Welcome the love that
bids thee see
The sick in the work-
house ward.

There's a pale face in
every bed
Troubled with dreary
doubt ;

Their eyes light up when they hear the tread
Of one from the world without.

Sunbeams that fall on the whitewashed walls
With joy their bosoms fill ;
But the smile on the face of her who calls
Is a sunbeam brighter still.

For she comes with words to cheer the heart
And soothe the patient ear,
Suiting to each with kindly art
Her song of the changing year.

Perchance this heart has loved the bird
That warbles upon the spray—
And that the fisherman's song has heard
Over the deep blue bay.

And one remembers the rambles bright
O'er copse and field and fell ;
Another the lamps of the aconite
That grows in the primrose dell.

She tells them of fields so fresh and green
Sprinkled with flowers of spring,
Of the shady lane that winds between,
And the heath where the linnets sing.

Now pigeons coo in leafy nook,
And tuneful thrushes trill ;
The daisy grows by the running brook,
The violet under the hill.

Laburnum, almond, lilac, now
Delight with varied hues ;
Fresh in the streets the lime-leaves grow
In emerald avenues.

The cuckoo haunts the budding grove,
The lithe bee floats afar,
Or spins his gauzy wings above
The scilla's azure star.

A thousand starlings fly and feed,
One knows "those speckled things,"
And "minds" upon the grassy mead
The murmur of their wings.

And thus she cheers the drooping heart
And soothes the patient ear,
Suiting to each with kindly art
Her-song of the changing year.

'Tis summer time—the blue sea heaves,
And, fringed with eddies white,
It ripples round a land of leaves
All waving in the light.

Come autumn days—the russet scene
She paints in glowing tone,
Lest from her lips they sadly glean
A sense of summer gone.

She brings them news of a joyous glee
That brightens the moments chill,
For robin sings in the hawthorn tree
Beside the purling rill.

Again they see in the winter time
The trees in the landscape dun,
Shedding their blossoms of silver rime
In the heat of the noonday sun.

They follow along the golden trail
That falls from the corn-cart's load,
And watch the shade of the windmill's sail
Sweep over the frosty road.

What wonder they have learnt to bless
That face as the roses fair—
To listen with painful eagerness
To her step upon the stair.

To love the voice so soft and good
That ever their joy enhanced—
Like a lonely sound in a leafless wood,
Holding the ear entranced.

For she comes to cheer the mourning heart,
And soothe the patient ear,
Suiting to each with kindly art
Her song of the changing year.

THE SWALLOW.



NO more the music of the
lark ascends into the
sky,
Nor round the land is
heard the cuckoo's
sweet and distant
cry ;
The thrush's note is
silent, and inconstant
Philomel
Low warbled in a
single night her wel-
come and farewell.

But faithful to his summer home the swallow wanders free,
In silver storms at April's close he came across the sea—
And day by day until his form grows dusky with the night,
He charms the eye with headlong dip and swiftly-curving flight.

Now high above the poplars, now low along the road,
He soars and skims and dives as if the air were his abode ;
Too blithe he seems to cease his flight and gentle Fancy grieve
With whisper of a mud-built nest beneath a cottage eave.

I linger where the bluebell grows beside the flowing stream,
Afar beyond the willow wood I watch him dart and gleam ;
He just disturbs the placid pond, or, in the rising gale,
On buoyant wing he eddies round the mill's revolving sail.

Inclement Autumn speeds the time a sunnier clime to choose,
Yet loth he seems to lose the ripening harvest of her hues :
The leaves come down with every wind, and robin sings alone—
But most I feel the swallows now have gathered and are gone.



THE SPIRIT'S JOURNEY.



ONE in a moment
Into the spectral land
Where the dark aliens
brood,
Terrors of sight and
sound
Dearth and decay
abound,
Where the bleached
bones are strewed,
Grave of the bloody
hand,
Gone in a moment !

Deeper and darker
Down the dread abysses,
Erebus flaring,
Smoke rolling black and dense
Phlegethon's pestilence
Here is no caring,
Here the foul snake hisses
Deeper and darker.

Lurid uncertainty,
Horrid upheaval,
Murderer's doom,
Life in a secret lair,
Shades of a fierce despair,
Tortuous gloom,
Awful retrieval,
Lurid uncertainty.

Only the deathless thing,
Phantom immortal,
To a void vanishing,
Visually glassing,
Wandering passing,
Memory banishing,
Destiny's portal,
Only the deathless thing.

On the weird mountain top,
Distances dreary,
Misty declivity,
Tombs of the very all,
Genie's burial,
Marsh-light activity,
Elements eerie,
On the weird mountain top.

Out of the spectral land,
Not to renew its pain,
There where the terrors reign,
Out of the spectral land.

* * * *

Silence ! it lives again.



THE HOUSE OF PLEASURE.



N rosy clouds I find it
built,
Upon the wind it
sails afar,
Blind patchwork of
a craven guilt
Where workmen only
make to mar
Of every style dis-
similar.

Profuse confusion
reigns within,

And every prodigal desire ;
Here wastes an unveracious din,
Here latitude is common hire
And trust a dweller in the mire.

Dark conscience plies a secret trade
As dealer in a general grace,
Here duncehood claims a saintly grade,
Sleek cunning woos with pliant face,
And fiction flies in dreams of space.

Here cause is alien to effect,
An aimless void the night that falls
In shadows of a fierce neglect,
And when a solemn gloom appals
Death is the ghost that haunts its halls.

Oh, ardent youth ! if hearts beat high
To stem life's fever and its fuss !
But even if it be worth a sigh,
Turn from the path that spends it thus,
The end is worse than perilous.



THE MAGICIAN'S CAVE.



U

P and down in the
laden air
And the rocks are
sundered wide,
A subtle magician
labours there
His cosmical arts
beside.

The yellow flame of
an antique lamp
Shines on the cavern
walls,

And through the dark roof, riven and damp,
The water trickles and falls.

And he is an old man fierce and gray,
And bent like a wind-swept reed,
And he lives far out of the light of day
In search of an evil deed.

Hither he roams and here he roams
With his gaze on the ground bent down,
He looks at large and sputters and foams
And his wrinkled features frown.

A stone his seat, his table a rock,
And his book is black with age,
The nether winds come up to mock
And trespass upon the page.

He presses the book with trembling aim
The shadows shudder and flee,
He crooks his fingers into the flame
Yet never a sound makes he.

But streaks of fire are on the leaf
For a mind has lost its light,
And how can innocence trace the thief
Throughout the toilsome night ?

Up and down in the laden air,
And hard by a little pool,
With form misshapen and tangled hair
Rises an ugly ghoul.

In him the looks of that old man lurk
And the flame is in his heart,
For a spirit to roam and madness work
Is the end of his mystic art.

A will to set the world astir
Is born of that fearful spell,
It flashes in changing character
As a hardy grief may tell.

Ah, woe betide the burning head,
And the frame in fever tossed,
With a fainting fear of the coming dread,
When the guiding light is lost.

For now is that imp ubiquitous
Coursing a nature through,
'Twas ever in human story thus,
And there are faults to rue.

He mocks despair, and laughs at pain,
He gibbers upon the wall,
He makes a voice of the pattering rain
And rides on the moaning squall.

He rivets the eyes with an iron band
And makes the limbs to shake,
He sits in cold on the feeble hand,
And racks the bones till they ache.

And phantom terrors he calls to view
To rive the sufferer's gaze,
He yields no truce at his deathly hue
But murders his fairest days.

And hither the furious noises hie
And claim in that frame a room,
Till known betime as a loathsome lie
They cease in that foul thing's doom.

Only her watch the nurse can keep
In the dumb descent of a trance,
When science steps in and makes us sleep
In the spell of a goblin glance.

Up and down in the laden air
But now the danger's past,
And the body may claim its weary share
Of the world's great rest at last.



SLEEP.



S

LEEP ! with a story ever
new
Again we woo thee
and again,
Our human nature's
soothing dew
Fresh falling on the
weared brain ;
Mysterious power !
thy praise I sing,
Without a care to
understand

Unravell'd joy on noiseless wing
Descending on a silent land.

Blest sleep ! the heart shall cease to ache—
Born to a world of inward light
Beneath thy kindly sway we take
That happy journey of the night,

When Fancy reigns on Reason's throne
And round his mad-cap subjects range,
Too early are their revels done
And we left grieving o'er the change.

Hushed in the mystery of rest
We seem to beg a trance of Time,
Unconsciously tended, blest ;
Incorporate with his march sublime :
A solemn land of spectral hues
With shapes that form and disappear,
Such pictures fair the mind reviews,
Or music lulls the dreaming ear.

In dreams we lead that other life
'Twi'x life and death that intervenes,
In pleasure sometimes, sometimes strife,
The spirit roams through phantom scenes ;
Often some sweet familiar spot
We glide to view in calm delight,
Perchance some wave-resounding grot
Or landscape rare—a sacred sight.

In slumber fearless have I strayed
Through labyrinths and ways unknown ;
Bright ocean waves have round me played,
I've seen the snow come softly down ;

Oft have I felt, o'ercharged with grief,
Some friendly touch, some kind caress,
That brings remembrance pure relief,
But ends too soon for happiness.

Sweet are the hours before the dawn
When sleep has hushed the busy town,
When in the forest rests the fawn,
And sheep are silent on the down ;
The bird is in his leafy bower,
Nor sound is loud upon the leas,
Then blest is slumber's serious hour
And blameless ecstasy of ease.

So whether Fancy play or weep,
While yet the vivid pictures pass
May memory her treasures keep
And all her golden store amass ;
So dear to me is all I have,
When the dim throng shall haste away,
Reality I'm left to brave
And dreams have vanished with the day.

A LOST HOLIDAY.



HAVE waited a month
for this day
Oft pictured in sun-
shine for me,
But the clouds gather
sullen and gray
And the rain rustles
loud on the tree ;
I could mingle a tear
with its fall
Since this is the end
of it all.

Ah, so to the victims of toil
Come the treacherous gleams of success,
But failure arises to foil
And the goal hides the storms of distress ;
Tear-drops might flow through my dreams
When I grieve o'er the fate of my schemes.

THE DISTANT SHORE.



I F some far scene we
cannot tell
A telescope will bring
it nearer ;
A heart to use the
present well
Will make the future
clearer.

And if it chance the
mighty lens
Shall charm us with a
pleasant land,

Not treacherous with slimy fens,
But with a shining strand,

And if a prospect sweet invite
Of crystal light and marble city
Flowered to the ethereal height
To hesitate were pity.

In patient trust it then were fit
To voyage to that distant quarter,
To launch a boat and pilot it
 Across the troubled water.

To shape a course with swelling sail
And never heed the breakers' roar,
And when the varying breezes fail
 To ply the oar.

Nor should we look for sudden shoal
Nor rock whereon to grate our keel,
But friendly buoys about our goal
 All dangers to reveal.

A people's welcome one and all
When we the placid harbour reach,
Where kindly hands come down to haul
 Our boat upon the beach.

And quiet mien and gentle smile
Shall greet us—all the life of day
And evening joys devoid of guile
 Delight our stay.

A city of an open mind
Where worthy speech is mutual gain ;
A place of trust that all mankind
 May make their fane.

A people's counsel freely urged,
A love that never can forget,
Though in our leave be sadness merged ;
 But anxious yet

To let our bark depart in hope
And keep a thought about its steerer ;
Ah me ! it needs no telescope
 To bring it nearer.



THE ROBIN.



SWEET minstrel of the
winter chill,
When darkest days
could scarcely still
Thy rare exultant song,
Thrice welcome was
the joyous note
That issued from thy
tiny throat
Continuous and strong.

Oft have I listened
overjoyed,

Alone thy music pierced the void
By nature's silence made,
When the sad trees waved green no more
But sparkling icy blossoms bore,
And white mists wrapped the glade.

Now all may hear the blackbird sing,
Now trills the lark on wandering wing,
The cuckoo cries afar ;
And now perchance with song of love
The nightingale may wake the grove
Beneath the trembling star.

Yet sing, thou trusty feathered friend,
With thy true note let music blend,
Of air and wood and stream ;
With new delight I pause to hear
The carol, constant to the year,
That cheered our winter dream.



DIAN'S DREAMLAND.



I N solemn wonder now I
pause,
I stand upon enchanted
ground,
For here by reasoning
the cause
A foothold I have
fairly found ;
I deem myself devoutly
blest
Philosophy can bear
the test. !

A fierce inhospitable earth
Has been my lot since here betrayed,
Of honest space a perfect dearth
Is here, save that which I have made,
And where I scarce can keep alive
A race of beings move and thrive.

They burn my intellectual fire
And with my hard-earned light they shine,
Themselves in all my thoughts admire
And fit their footsteps into mine,
Because so satisfied are they
That day is night and night is day.

We all must speak the selfsame tongue,
But surely cultivated taste
Revolts when words like stones are flung
And simple facts are all misplaced ;
I find on my enchanted ground
That verbal man-traps most abound.

As here and there they move about
True action is a vain pretence,
Yet they can cure without a doubt
Such automatic indolence ;
They pain my mind and make me care
For every unbecoming stare.

Nice grace and feeling—pleasant traits—
They never show in deed or word,
They only live to thread a maze
In ways annoyingly absurd ;
But I should meet with dire mishap
Were I to dream in Dian's lap.

In no dark chamber will I hide
To break my light through falsehood's prism,
But to the day evanish wide
The spelt of Dunccehood's despotism ;
To prove my time I have the power
And may not spare the evil hour.

To yield is to augment my toil,
Such scenes exist to mar our joys,
These creatures of a phantom soil
A sound philosophy destroys ;
'Tis done ! no freedom I allow,
And earth may keep the juggle now.



THE VOICE OF SORROW.



IT came with an exquisite
tenderness
To lighten my fear of
the day,
My tears flowed out-
ward in gentleness
As it bore my long
trouble away.

It found me impatient
and fretful,
In pain from neglect's
cruel smart ;

It left me in bliss and forgetful
Of all save its love in my heart.

THE MINE OF FORGETFULNESS.



DESTROYERS, heathen,
secret band
Whom Time at length
must sternly teach,
You whose fierce rule
affrights the land,
Who practice not the
creed you preach

Descend and work !
be blind be bold !
Your brazen Sesames
repeat !

Below are galleries of gold,
Heed not the fire beneath your feet.

Far from the honest light of day
Here is your unlearnt history sought ;
What Time shall yield to such assay
Held in your mine of martyred thought ?

All reckless how the track was made
You onward trace the glittering lode
Through oozy slime and horrid shade
To the last secret's dread abode.

Callous, with keep and hire secure,
The world from suffering hearts you wring ;
I cry your coinage immature
And down for one the gauntlet fling.

My right is in my grievous loss,
I too have learnt and burnt your book,
And as a fable deem the dross
That melts before a fearless look.

And though the infant hue may pale,
And Sorrow sit in black array,
Though the poor labourer Patience fail
And famish on his voiceless way

Seek in the dark the shining ore,
Be true ! deny that dangers lurk—
For gold is good and more gets more,
And wealth is life ; descend and work !

THE LAND OF FANCY.



AT length I grasp a
friendly hand,
Oh, all the heart can
now expand,
Flown hither to this
fruitful land
My labour has not
failed ;
And Truth I've toiled
to understand
Is pleasantly unveiled.

A faery realm where not in vain
Dwells the true magic of the brain,
Where Joy comes up with glittering train,
And Grandeur finely wrought ;
Each owns a separate domain
Of wise and ardent thought.

Yielding to music's soothing will
Emotion listens grave and still
While the harmonious measures fill
 The mind with pleasures rare,
And voices blend with varied skill
 In cadences of care.

Painting from line and curve will trace
With gifts conserved all beauty's grace,
And faithful heed to time and place
 Can cause no soft alarm,
While truth endows a rustic face
 With colour's wondrous charm.

Sweet words with passing scenes compare
To make a language seem more fair,
Child of the immemorial air
 Here poetry survives,
The highest story to declare
 In all the good that lives.

Now love is eager to devise
For every day some new surprise,
Fancy against all mysteries
 In mirth lifts up her voice ;
Not in self-will dear freedom lies
 But cultivated choice.

Enchanting land ! to learn at last
No shadow e'er was falsely cast,
No labour vain in all the vast
 Illimitable span ;
Here man enjoys his cloudless past
 Who loves his fellow man.

Time has again a fairer flight
Within the sphere of honest right,
Oh, gentle heart ! the day is bright
 And there is work to cheer ;
We move in that serener light
 That guides a true career.

Enthusiasm now is freed,
Of age the flower, of youth the seed,
Reflective learning's welcome meed,
 Seclusion's antidote ;
And pensive sentiment may plead
 A kinship not remote.

Arrayed, from Industry's retreat,
New actions in alliance meet
Their outward service to complete
 In happy discipline,
Where diverse views may well compete
 And pleasant art refine.

She too reigns here, our best ideal
Of all pure womanhood can feel,
Alert to every soft appeal,
 Let honour her become,
With smiles to banish the unreal,
 Queen of the peaceful home.

Kind in her merry elfin years,
Older, her homely love endears,
Calm when the evening light appears,
 Beneficent her will ;
To the friend's part she still adheres
 She most is proud to fill.

A grand inalienable dower,
True dignity in strength will tower,
To final day and farthest hour
 Its might unruffled keep ;
It holds its place in silent power,
 A night-watch on the deep.

Love gains by forethought's worthy flow,
By kind exchange our pleasures grow,
For this above all truths I know
 Life is no idle dream
And far beyond all fleeting show
 Contentment rules supreme.

A SUMMER IDYLL.



CHILL winds and sullen
skies had closed the
spring,
And now so fast appear
the summer days
Amazed we stray
through nature's
leafy ways
And bounteous
blossoming.

Bare were the boughs that now are waving green,
Brown were the fields now bright with rising corn ;
Now blends the scent of lilac and of thorn,
Changed is the homely scene.

Wild flowers deck every mead and grassy nook,
Making rude gardens of each common spot ;
Speedwell and daisy, and forget-me-not,
Beside the winding brook.

With meadow-gold the marshy hollows glow
Where the stream glances through the tangled ground ;
Beyond, in copses cool, with constant sound
The shining ripples flow.

The covert, shady through the sultry hours,
Beguiles to dream beside the smooth beech-tree
While a thrush sings, and a far wandering bee
Climbs up the bending flowers.

Rare as some friendly harbinger of good,
Slow to the ash the cuckoo sails along,
Looks swiftly round, and cries his dulcet song
Down to the distant wood.

A little pleasure fills a willing heart,
Speaks to the town of lanes and prospects fair
Where restless swallows darting through the air
To all may joy impart.

And when the warm wind stirs the murmuring groves,
And from their depths such happy songs resound,
An echo in man's heart is surely found,
He listens and he loves.

The elder's cloudy blossom greets July ;
With roses pink and pale, those way-side gems,
Falling like garlands from their hidden stems
 To charm the passer-by.

In ricks are tossed the fragrance of the fields,
The carts go by me with their pleasant load ;
And a sweet scent along the dusty road
 The honeysuckle yields.

The dragon-flies hang motionless, or sweep
Over the meadow-sweet that fills the copse ;
The bees upon the yielding thistle-tops
 Clamber and burrow deep.

With changing hues of harvest far and wide
In fervid heat the shining landscape glows ;
Near, in the breeze, the silken barley flows
 Like waves that fret a tide.

Time shows our seasons in a varied guise,
He takes our flowers but leaves us not forlorn,
The mellow glory of the burning corn
 Delights expectant eyes.

With Science clanking to the falling sheaves
The anxious heart may count its laboured gains,
And with the gathered grain contentment reigns
 'Neath halls and village eaves.

SOLITUDE.



THE carol of our youth
is sung,
We go no more with
tread elate,
But leave their pæan
to the young,
And cast a wistful eye
at fate ;
Yet Solitude is not a
doom
That we should live
apart, forlorn,

And let a dark meridian gloom
Belie the promise of the morn ;
Better to grow to thoughts inclined
Whose wise delights can please the mind.

Deem not, in melancholy mood,
The world's great school a scene of strife,
Nor seek in all its diverse good
The shadows of the present life ;

Better to find in book and song
And pencil's power a brighter path,
To earnest hearts alone belong
Each year's autumnal aftermath ;
Let darkness doubt, as like a star
The trustful future gleams afar.

True love has no capricious change,
—Or truant hours be fast or slow—
It comes to cheer and not estrange,
To soothe our fancies genial flow ;
And then a charm before unknown
Will ever in the memory dwell,
In weighty word and treasured tone
In ardent look and fond farewell,
And pleased we find one sorrow less
And feel no pain in loneliness.

The vanished sun at evening cast
A crimson gleam upon the hill,
So bright achievements of the past
Shall light to-day's determined will ;
A flower upon a dreary waste
From far attracts a wanderer's gaze,
So kindly thought is ne'er misplaced
That helps distress to happier days
When flows, beyond the stage's art,
The rapture of a lightened heart.

Struggling with prospects multiform
We cannot know what joys remain,
But take the path and brave the storm
And every step is greater gain ;
Though hoary Time may claim his due
And deeper lines of care may trace,
Each true heart's work proclaims anew
The grandeur of a tireless race ;
Vain is the moment to despoil
Recorded centuries of toil.

What faith would care to be a guest
Among the desperate and rude ?
Far better through the silent quest
The pensive dreams of Solitude ;
To choose upon the rock of fact
A strong philosophy to rear
With honest argument compact
And every human outlet clear ;
For thankless trouble soon will cease
When care obtains its just release.

They do the earnest thinker wrong
Who claim true words like pearls are cast ;
But earthly life is very long
And the gold-finder tires at last ;

In wise degree throughout the land
Each plies his calling or his trade,
And rules that guide the heart and hand
In strictest art must be obeyed,
Then were it fair to claim again
A world where pleasantry may reign.

But not till then—though long suspense
On the keen intellect may prey,
And though from suffering intense
The face be drawn and head be grey—
The trust that comes our lives to bless
We carry to an anxious end,
Cheered by a silent thankfulness
That most does Solitude befriend,
Till all that may conflict with right
Seems but a vision of the night.



FRIENDSHIP.



LONG heralded by mel-
low light
In the still air
Serenely fair
Rises the moon to
course the night.

So, brighter as our
days depart,
Most sweetly sought
In quiet thought,
A constant friendship
cheers the heart.

Attaining to the noblest heights -
All unbeguiled,
And as a child
A treasury of Time's delights.

Of trustful voice and faithful mien,
As harvest true
A lifetime through,
And, like the ivy, ever green.

Seeking no falsity profound,
But strong in sense
That shuns pretence,
And to a cherished circle bound.

Wise, with a generous hand for all
Who love it well
Where'er they dwell,
In cottage fair or lordly hall

Joy is no straining at a guess,
A fruitless quest,
But joy loves best
The least expected happiness.

A certain pleasure all my own
Like some romance,
By simple chance
I found as far I roamed alone

A prize in happy days of yore,
Remembered well,
A beauteous shell
Cast up upon an eastern shore.

It went my cabinet to grace ;
So, proudly lacked,
A friendly act
In the fond heart may find a place.

Ah, dearest friendship ! true as kind,
What loving eyes
In sweet surprise
In all its tale a rapture find.

• Soothing as slumber to the brain,
A tender glow
Is all we know
Like sunlight in a leafy lane.



THE WORLD OF WISDOM.



SEEMING decade once
I dwelt
In a strange home I
called my own,
Till all about my room
I felt
Within, without,
familiar grown :
No mental effort did it
need
To prove that home
was real indeed.

Upon the wall a portrait hung,
And through the pane I saw the church,
Dark shadows on the sward were flung
By laurel, lime, and ivied birch ;
And in its cage the morning long
A blithe canary rang its song.

No ghostly fancies did I share,
My thoughts in visions did not stray
The time that I became aware
A wondrous world about me lay ;
A will to learn its origin
Invited me to roam therein,

And so it chanced to come to pass
Upon a day that I could name
I stepped in through the chimney glass
As though it were an empty frame ;
And found a person grave and staid,
As I, in modern garb arrayed.

At recollection I'm no dunce,
But this I got from meeting him,
I found myself transferred at once
To war-ship's plank and chamber dim ;
A deck above I just descried,
A gun went through the chamber's side.

It vanished and there came to view
A winding road beside the sea ;
A sloping mead of emerald hue
Appeared beyond, but where was he ?
With their deep-sounding evermore
The waves were surging on the shore.

Then to a village street I sped
Deep-wreathed in snow, the night storm's fall,
Where came to halt from silent tread
A long and sombre funeral ;
Darker it made the wintry day
And passed sepulchrally away.

Far stretching o'er a span of sense
Another picture was revealed,
I paced in childish innocence
The flagged school playground and the field ;
And figures prepossessed with care
Moved unfamiliarly there.

They lodged me in a queer retreat,
Where quietude was all my aim,
And there, as if it showed conceit,
A wizard through the ceiling came
With a demand to know if I
Had made a comet in the sky.

When, wearied out, I sought the place
Of my aërial repose
The worst of their complacent race,
A most ill-looking fellow, rose,
And while I slept, oh sad mishap,
He stole the feather from my cap.

An old man at a table sat
To write a note or make a will ;
And I was forced to smile thereat—
He scrawled away with uncut quill ;
Blind, heedless of all social din,
He lived on fantasies within.

And then I met an ancient dame,
Who seemed beyond fair custom free,
Upsetting all my mental frame
She asked my work for charity ;
The labour done was all my meed,
She took the credit of the deed.

Next came a boy of pliant speech
Who leapt to manhood at a guess,
With simpered words that aimed to teach
A self-approving nothingness ;
But on he went and left no trace
Of what delights in boyhood's grace.

Then marched a man of decent age,
Who scanned his kind with frowning mien,
I seemed with him to stalk a stage
And he, the Mentor of the scene,
A perfect Proteus at the art,
Whereas I had to learn my part.

Next a young woman wandered by
With vivid mind and giggling grace,
And, as regards the serious tie,
With archness rather out of place,
Prepared as insult to resent
A privilege that was not meant.

And all the people seemed to shirk
All labour save to play and dance,
I tired me of the weary work
To force my way where all was chance ;
Yet stumbling on I felt myself
By their neglect of life ill-used,
So when I gained a rocky shelf
I sat me down and thus I mused :

A world where each demands the whole,
Although the means of transit fail,
Yet bars the gate and shouts for toll,
Claiming withal a secret trail,
Whose people all impose a yoke
On native thought yet elbow free,
Is not a place for simple folk
Who trudge an honest destiny.

A race whom ignorance enshrouds,
Whose light from a mock sun proceeds,
Whose life is in the tempest clouds,
Whose flowers are equalised with weeds,

Deserve no share of heart-felt joy
That comes of labour purely done,
And should not fuse their base alloy
With the true gold so fairly won.

For lack of knowledge no one blabs,
You lose your way and none may tell,
For here they live like hermit crabs,
They kill the fish and take the shell ;
And for a power your woes to mock
They sting like gnats in summer air,
And close as limpets to the rock
Cling to the heritage they share.

Mostly in sadness, seldom gay,
At times of all my sense bereft,
At length I fairly worked my way
Back to the world that I had left,
And with a joy I could not feign
I stepped back through the frame again.

I found the bird upon its perch,
I found the portrait on the wall,
Peeped through the window at the church,
Saw on the grass the shadows fall
And learnt the world I'd been to see
Had no reality for me.

THE FAIRY ISLAND.



FAIR Amalis ! it is my
song !

I sight betime the
golden shore,

Love has been with
me o'er the main

And now I have come
back again

To leave my cherished
theme no more.

Dear Amalis ! harmonious isle !
Where looks are kind and words are fair
And gentle natures coalesce,
Ah ! who can speak the happiness
Of those who breathe its native air.

From towering peak I view afar
The circle of its sparkling seas ;
I watch the shadows on the field,
And see the waving branches yield
A pathway to the summer breeze.

A guiding power has made me feel
In a new life a fresher tale,
In reverie I seem to see
A faithful story kept for me,
I ramble on through lane and dale.

Now joy is on the quiet hearth,
Soft music charms the mellow night,
And sailing in the azure deep
Upon the landscapes stilled in sleep
The shining moon bestows her light.

A time to muse—and to forget—
Unspoken is the present bliss
As all within me lies at peace,
The dreamy strains of music cease,
And here is rest, sweet Amalis.

THE ASTROLOGER'S ANSWER.



A LITTLE astrologer versed in
lore
Sat at a table up in the
sky
Where spirits enquired
at his learning's store,
And to each he made a
polite reply,
For never in thought, in
word or act
A foolish riddle did he
propound,
His answers were based
upon simple fact,

Which he held was best as the world went round,
But whether his questioners wiser grew
He never cared as he never knew.

“ Why,” was he asked, “ are we poised in space
At nearly the twenty-fourth degree ?
If earth pursued an upright race
Explain what difference there would be.—
A general folk would be mankind
The beauteous seasons then would cease,
Flora and fauna you would find
The same in England as at Nice,
The Esquimaux would deem it hot
And cold would freeze the Hottentot.”

“ Why do we see but half the moon ?
And why does it larger and smaller grow ?—
Because it has turned once round as soon
As it has gone round your earth below ;
And the reason it changes shape is this,
You think of the part that the sun shines on
And caring but little for what you miss
You fancy the rest of the moon is gone,
But that, I assure you, is not the case
It is there as much as the full moon’s face.”

“ Why in the daylight Nature stills ?
And why is the sun so black of hue ?
And birds go roosting ?—It always fills
My cup of pleasure to answer you—

It is not the sun that is black at all
But the solid moon that has come between
That over Nature has spread a pall,
(Try it yourselves with a lamp and screen),
And when your earth's deprived of light
The birds no doubt suppose it's night."

"What star each night will larger sail
Part of it streaming in the air?—
A comet it is that carries a tail
(From the Latin, *coma* "flowing hair").
And you yourselves are the merest specks
Till you prove as large as you really are,
It is not a problem that ought to vex.
These lustrous bodies seen afar
Are naturally small, but near
Of course much bigger they appear."

They brought him up a celestial chart :
Earth in the middle,—“explain us that?
Now why should so much space depart.—
By this I see the heavens are flat,
Here's height and depth, but if it goes
To nowhere you've yourselves to thank,
Like one huge game of dominoes,
But when you make it double blank—
I can't conceive a system worse
Whose blank-blank is the universe."

Our minds are better for thought's exchange,
And nice replies are pleasant links
To hold together ideas that range
(So that little astrologer thinks) ;
He loves to help in a quiet way
All to the knowledge that he enjoys,
His pleasure it is to explain away
That which too long a brain employs ;
He is ready as ever to fill his cup—
But somehow his questioners don't come up.



A NURSE'S STORY.



HEN Tommy was ten
His kind cousin Ben
Unthinkingly bought
him a drum,
Which all down the
street
He obnoxiously beat
Till people got harried
and glum.

He was one of those
boys

Who delight in a noise,
—It makes them a regular boor ;—
That had Tommy become
In thumping his drum
Outside an old gentleman's door.

He fancied, my dears,
That elderly ears
Must tingle with pride at the sound,
And when he began
In the loud rataplan
The voice of objection was drowned.

He beat his tattoo
As naughty boys do
When bent on their mischievous games ;
You must all of you see
How wrong it must be
When a gentleman's face it inflames.

But as Tommy still played
To the gentleman's aid
Came a thought, so he gave him a knife,
“ Let us probe, little boy,
This inveterate toy
That is deafening me and my wife.”

“ To make it more clear
To her sensitive ear,
That, you know, cannot bear with the din,
Let us open the drum
And no doubt we shall come
On the cause of the rattle within.”

Now the tiresome lad
Curiosity had
Unfeelingly strong for his years,
So he cut it, and found
Not a nice noisy sound
Could be got from it after, my dears.

At that ignorant child
The old gentleman smiled
And remarked, as he gazed at the drum,
“ You have found the cause now
Of your wicked tow-row,”
And he told his poor wife it was dumb.



THE CHILDREN'S HOME.



How I know the sweetest
hour,
Cold with no dew of vain
regret,
As calm in childhood's
trusting power
Comes forth to meet me,
Violet.

And Valentine with
eager look
Opens his treasured
world to me ;

They close my fingers on the book,
They lead me home and make me free.

To-day I saw in Summer green
The woodbine and the hedge-bell twine,
Fair emblems of the loves serene
Of Violet and Valentine.

THE END.



